

Teacher and Principal Evaluation

"Influencing Transformation"

Communication #20

September 13, 2013

Sphere One

By the end of Sphere 1, leadership personnel should know and be able to conduct beginning of the year pre-evaluation conferences that include reporting the teacher or principal's MSA translation scores, the setting of teacher or principal Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), a basic understanding of how to construct three year-cohorts, and plan the evaluation workload for the 2013-2014 school year.

Readiness Quick Check

- ✓ Evaluation pre-conferences have been scheduled with teachers and principals
- ✓ Local Education Agency (LEA) participants in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Teacher and Principal Evaluation (TPE) Professional Development and Technical Assistance trainings have been identified and informed
- ✓ District and school stakeholders have received informational updates
- ✓ Teachers and principals have received informational updates
- ✓ A district professional development plan has been crafted to prepare principals for implementing local TPE plans
- ✓ A district plan to prepare teachers for implementing local TPE plans has been crafted and shared

Quality Control

9/25-11/10

LEA Direct Assistance Window

10/30

Quality Control Session

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Quality Control Meeting

The first Quality Control meeting was conducted on August 29. The primary purpose of the meeting was to determine how the group might operate within the five professional development "Spheres of Influence" to provide periodic assurances of quality progress. The intent is to capitalize on the sphere cycles by capturing artifacts from LEAs throughout the year to gauge progress, make adjustments, and ease the collection of evidence of accomplishments at the end of the project. Most of this collection will be conducted during the professional development sessions with executive officers, professional development coordinators, and technical personnel. With representation from each of the LEAs and Maryland's superintendent, teacher, and principal associations, the Quality Control Group will receive feedback from each of the three professional development sessions relevant to the sphere outcome. The feedback and the artifacts will assist the Quality Control Group in making determinations about progress. The TPE Team believes that this process may alleviate the need for random audits and unnecessary surveys. Continuing to serve as a critical friend, the MAAC@WestEd will in turn provide the TPE Team with feedback and perspective on the Quality Control process.

Influencing Transformation

During this year, the State is implementing "Influencing Transformation: Maryland's Plan for Preparing Educators to Implement and Sustain Teacher and Principal Evaluation" (see Communication 19). This plan addresses elements of Technical Assistance, Leadership Development, Communications, and Quality Control that are critical to executing local evaluation plans, increasing the capacity of internal and external stakeholders, and elevating confidence in evaluation as a developmental process. Because of the timing of summer and the opening of schools, some of the work of Sphere 1 and Sphere 2 is being compressed into the Sphere 2 informational and training sessions. Sphere 2 will begin on September 20 – with informational sessions and professional development sessions occurring for unique audiences on September 24 (Executive Officers), September 25 (Technical Personnel), and September 26 (PD Coordinators). The TPE Lead for each of these presentations (Ilene Swirnow, Ben Feldman, and Linda Burgee) has

developed the meeting cohort list and will be contacting participants directly with details about agendas, logistics, and materials. Communications regarding meetings will also be copied to TPE Points of Contact. To add certainty and reduce redundancy for these first training meetings, we ask that Points of Contact carefully review the list of their participants to insure that the correct individuals are attending the appropriate meetings.

LEA Direct Service Windows

Within each Sphere is a period of time that the TPE Team can provide direct professional development services on the sphere outcome to LEAs. Given the varying structure of the LEAs, this service may take the form of informing local leadership, partnering with the delivery of local professional development, or actually providing the professional development to the LEA. It is the responsibility of the LEA Point of Contact to contact the TPE Team to initiate a request and to describe the local need. Drawing on existing LEA calendars, the TPE Team is prepared to tailor the professional development to satisfy the interest of the individual LEA. Requests are already occurring, so LEAs must allow adequate lead time if they are interested in securing this service.

LEA TPE Implementation Grants

The long-awaited TPE Implementation Grants were issued during the week of September 9, 2013. Recall that these grants are designed to level the capacity for LEAs to conduct the work around Teacher and Principal Evaluation, therefore the distribution of these grants was sensitive to local demographic, organizational, and resource limitations. The priority parameters for using these funds are contained in the Implementation Grant packet that accompanied the grant notification. The State hopes that these funds will level the ability for all LEAs to conduct the work necessary to fully implement their evaluation plans. The TPE Project hopes to provide an additional round of TPE grants associated with sustainability at mid-year.

State Field Test Pilot Grants

TPE Grants were recently awarded to the LEAs that provided technical assistance and data access to validate the State Evaluation Models. The State deeply appreciates the collaborative work that was conducted in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Somerset, and Wicomico Counties. This work was critical to informing the final design of the State models and in identifying promising practices for all LEAs to consider. These grants may be used by these LEAs to offset costs associated with piloting the State models or applied to current TPE initiatives.

Amendments to ESEA Flexibility Waiver

In June, USDE offered States the option of applying for two amendments to their current ESEA Flexibility waiver that would (1) defer the use of test measures in making personnel decisions and (2) prohibit double testing of students. In response to these offers, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is proposing to delay personnel decisions based upon new evaluation systems for one additional year and (2) is requesting a one year waiver to allow schools participating in the PARCC field tests to administer only one assessment in 2013-14 to any individual student – either the current Maryland School Assessment or the PARCC field test.

Given the complexities of moving to developing and implementing college-ready and career-ready standards, the changes in curricula that teachers and principals must now start to teach, the transition to new assessments aligned to those standards, and the implementation of teacher and principal evaluation and support systems which include student growth as a significant factor and provide meaningful feedback to improve leadership and instruction; the State believes an amendment to defer the application of test scores to personnel decisions will provide time that is critical to elevating teacher and principal confidence in performance ratings resulting from these collective initiatives. This additional time will allow LEAs and the State to confirm that component measures are performing as intended and that combined measures equate to ratings that accurately reflect educator performance and result in appropriate professional development that is associated with the individual's developmental needs. LEAs will complete their evaluation processes according to their approved plans. Ratings will be used to inform developmental

conversations and to frame the LEAs' study of the effectiveness of their intended evaluation system. The State believes this step satisfies the requirements found within the Flexibility Waiver of 2012 and the Race to the Top grant. LEAs will then extract the MSA growth measures and use the remaining portions of the evaluation to inform personnel decisions.

This process will accommodate the concerns previously noted and build teacher and principal confidence in the accuracy and fairness of State and local evaluation processes in advance of their application to personnel decisions. During this transition, the State will be implementing "Influencing Transformation: Maryland's Plan for Preparing Educators to Implement and Sustain Teacher and Principal Evaluation." This plan addresses elements of Technical Assistance, Leadership Development, Communications, and Quality Control that are critical to executing local evaluation plans, increasing the capacity of internal and external stakeholders, and elevating confidence in the evaluation as a developmental process. When implemented statewide, these new evaluation systems will be used to continually improve instruction; differentiate performance at three levels; determine performance levels using multiple valid measures, including as a significant factor data on student growth for all students and other measures of professional practice; evaluate teachers and principals on a regular basis, and provide clear, timely, and useful feedback to drive support and professional development.

Maryland also continues to be a member of the PARCC assessment consortium. To date, Maryland has been allocated 49,441 field testing slots and plans to field test one classroom of approximately 25-30 students in every school in the spring of 2014. Maryland believes in strong accountability and understands the federal law requiring every student in grades 3 through 8 to be tested annually in both reading/ language arts and mathematics, as well as once in high school. That being said, Maryland believes it is unfair and unreasonable to expect almost 50,000 students to take two statewide assessments in the spring of 2014. The State supports a philosophy of "one child – one test."

Additionally, because students field testing the PARCC assessments will not receive scores, which inhibits the State's ability to calculate a School Progress Index for 2013-14, MSDE is requesting that those schools field testing the PARCC assessments in the spring of 2014 be permitted to retain their federal accountability designations for an additional year. In those schools where PARCC is field tested, the accountability status will be frozen as of the end of the 2012-13 school year. While as of this date, Maryland has not received the additional guidance on "double testing" mentioned in Secretary Duncan's June 18, 2013 letter to Chief State School Officers, MSDE understands there has been some discussion regarding the setting of thresholds for "freezing" accountability status. Maryland would expect its plan for field testing one classroom in every school would meet any thresholds that may be imposed.

MSDE leadership met with local superintendents, representatives of the State education association and representatives from the Governor's office on July 15, 2013 and August 13, 2013. A committee composed of MSDE staff, LEA staff, and representatives of the State education association met to draft the written amendment on August 26, 2013. The State Board of Education was briefed by the State Superintendent of Schools at an open meeting on August 27, 2013. On August 30, 2013, MSDE sent an email to all LEAs and the state education association inviting comment on the draft amendment. The comments were evaluated by MSDE staff and some revisions were made to the draft amendment. A public notice including the revised draft amendment is posted on the MSDE website from September 9 to 20, 2013. The request and any comments received will be presented to the State Board at an open meeting on September 24, 2013.

Teachers and Principals

The need for assurance that TPE information finds its way to teachers and principals, and the pivotal role of principals in this process is repeated in practically every forum that deals with TPE. As LEAs move to implementation, it is critical that principals and teachers become the

	<p>beneficiaries of local training opportunities and information sharing. Strong collaborative partnerships between central offices, principals, and teachers are essential to maintaining the group’s collective capacity to do the work at quality levels. The Quality Control Group will continue to explore ways to validate with principals and teachers that this is occurring and to solicit the voices of teachers and principals during the implementation process.</p>
<p>Technical Assistance</p> <p>9/25 LEA Technical Assistance</p> <p>Ben Feldman bfeldman@msde.state.md.us</p>	<p><u>Technical Assistance Meeting</u></p> <p>With the 2012-13 statewide field test successfully behind us, the “Field Test” strand of the Teacher Principal Action Team shifts focus to Technical Assistance for the duration of the project. On September 25, 2013, LEA partners with specific responsibilities for data, analysis, and IT will convene to review recent learnings and to plan the coming year. We will have a brief wrap up of the pilot, including summary results and the most recent thinking about cut scores. There will be an update on research activities conducted by our independent partner, MAAC@ WestEd. Of the immediate tasks which form the bulk of the discussion for the first of the “Spheres of Influence,” several have important technical components: translating the MSA scores for all teachers, building three cohorts of teachers for the rolling evaluation plan, and sharing LEA solutions and issues. Time will be spent reviewing a recent third party solution developed for one LEA. This new technology system is particularly interesting because it reflects the work as it is presently formulated. This will lead into a discussion of other vendor activities which have presence elsewhere in the State. To supplement this work, MSDE has become a member of the Quality Evaluation Rollout (QER) workgroup, part of the Reform Support Network. QER is particularly interested in LEA dashboards and state scorecards, and we can begin to frame the questions that would form a Maryland scorecard. Details regarding this meeting will be coming from Ben Feldman.</p> <p><u>Technical Assistance: Quality Control</u></p> <p>Looking ahead to June 2014, this year all LEAs will need to participate in a consistent data collection, along the lines of the kind of information provided by those LEAs that field tested the State model or did stress testing. The aim will be to make this as parsimonious and burden-free as possible.</p> <p>Lastly, LEAs understand that every conversation with the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) arrives at the question, “How will you know?” A key strategy to prepare Maryland for this inevitable conversation is to assemble documentation from all LEAs and from the MSDE team at each juncture as we move through the Spheres of Influence. To that end, LEAs will always be asked to provide brief answers to the salient questions of the moment, never more than one or two pages. Also, there will be specific artifacts that are requested as part of the “Evidence of Quality” category of the Sphere of Influence overall structure. These are stated explicitly. By the end of the year, this documentation will be extensive, rich, and convincing.</p>
<p>Leadership Development</p> <p>9/24 Executive Officers Summit 2</p> <p>9/26 LEA PD Coordinators</p> <p>Ilene Swirnow iswirnow@msde.state.md.us</p> <p>Linda Burgee lburgee@msde.state.md.us</p>	<p><u>Executive Officer Summit 1</u></p> <p>The Professional Development Team has delivered the content for Summit 1 of the series entitled, Influencing Transformation: A Series of Summits, Leadership for a Quality Evaluation System. These summits have been designed specifically for the professional development of Executive Officers, those staff member directly responsible for the supervision and evaluation of principals in each LEA.</p> <p>High quality teaching and learning requires a foundation of focused instructional leadership. This leadership is interconnected and is provided by the classroom teacher, instructional content leaders, school administrators, and those who oversee and supervise the schools and principals, the Executive Officers. To be successful, it is critical that focused supervision, professional development, and supports for instruction are aligned. Well-aligned processes for TPE are critical to the achievement of high quality teaching and learning. It is our belief that by training the Executive Officers who can then train their principals, and in turn, their teachers, we have reached a large and critical demographic in the TPE process.</p>

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Designed to complement the actual timeline of the TPE process, the summits provide a proactive means of helping Executive Officers to prepare for the steps that lie ahead in the process. For example, by working with Executive Officers on setting goals and expectations for purposeful school visits, they will be more prepared to observe principals' behaviors as well as those behaviors exhibited on a school-wide basis that reflect evidence of quality in professional practice in addition to those best practices in promoting student achievement and growth.

Recognizing the depth and breadth of the behaviors and evidences that reflect those best practices, the summits tie the evaluation process to the outcomes in the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework as well as the practices and strategies for observing the implementation of the both the instructional shifts in the Common Core State Standards and the principal and teacher SLOs that measure student growth and achievement.

Executive Officer Summit 2

Summit 2, scheduled for September 24th at the Anne Arundel Community College, will present an agenda that focuses on the next phase of the TPE process and will include topics such as establishing goals and expectations for purposeful school visits; collecting appropriate and relevant evidence to support and/or differentiate performance criteria for professional practice; and monitoring the development and implementation of SLOs. Details regarding this meeting will be coming from Ilene Swirnow.

Professional Development Coordinators

The first training session for LEA individuals who are responsible for training district personnel will take place on September 26th at Anne Arundel Community College. The dates for these meetings are being coordinated with MSDE's Division of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. This work will focus heavily on SLOs and is intended for those individuals who will be teaching teachers to understand and employ SLOs in their evaluations. Details regarding this meeting will be coming from Linda Burgee.

Communications

9/20

Superintendents Mtg.

9/27

Assistant Superintendents Mtg.

10/1

Communication Bulletin #21

11/4

Communication Bulletin #22

Transitions and Integration

The first of four Regional Back to School Public Forums on the Common Core State Standards was conducted on Monday September 9, 2013, in Easton Maryland. More than a hundred attendees participated in a program in which the State, the PTA, and practicing teachers informed the public about the Common Core Standards and responded to audience questions. The presentation was both productive and positive in conveying the potential for the Common Core to elevate instructional rigor and in reassuring parents of its prospect for advancing the education of their children. Additional Forums are scheduled for Western Maryland on September 16th at S. Hagerstown High School, Central Maryland on September 19th at Ridge Ruxton School, and D.C. Metro/Southern Maryland on October 1st at Charles Herbert Flowers High School. All Forums will be held from 7:00-8:30 PM on their respective dates.

Outreach

Maryland Public Television (MPT) has produced several Common Core video interstitials (formerly known as PSAs). They are very effective in communicating key messages in a brief, easy-to-understand format. These Common Core interstitials have recently begun to air on MPT, are posted on the MSDE website, and are also available to view and download in a variety of formats at this link: <http://www.warnerhanson.com/mpt/index.html>. MSDE has also received approval from MPT to air the spots on local education channels. These short videos are a wonderful lead into discussions about the Common Core and MSDE hopes you will forward this information to your colleagues and constituents as appropriate.

Next Communication Bulletin

TPE Communication Bulletin 21 will be released during the week of October 1. It will contain information from each of the three training sessions along with Quality Control and Communication updates.

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